



A weekly question/answer column

What Is A Serving Size For A Preschooler?

Georgia Lauritzen answers:*

While adults can feel distressed that only six triangular-shaped corn chips equal one serving size, children can be overwhelmed by adult-sized food portions. Children require the same number of servings as adults from each group in the Food Guide Pyramid, but in smaller portions.

Portion sizes also vary depending on the age of the child. A 2-year old can require a considerably smaller portion than a 5-year old. Start with small portions and add more if requested.

The Food Guide Pyramid emphasizes foods from six food groups. Adults and children should get 6 to 11 servings from the bread, cereal, rice and pasta group; 3 to 5 from the vegetable group; 2 to 4 from the fruit group; 2 to 3 from the milk, yogurt and cheese group; 2 to 3 from the meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts group; and sparing amounts from the fats, oils and sweets group.

While an adult's serving size of milk is one cup, a child-sized serving is one-half to three-fourths cup. Some other child-sized portions for a 2- to 5-year old include:

- one-half to one slice of bread, one-half cup of rice or pasta, or three graham cracker squares;
- one-fourth cup cooked or one-half cup raw vegetables;
- one-half cup fruit juice or one small piece of fresh fruit;
- one-half to three-fourths cup yogurt or three-fourths to one ounce of cheese;
- one to two ounces of meat, one egg, one-half to three-fourths cup cooked beans, or two tablespoons peanut butter.

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